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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 001122

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

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MG, ECON, EAID, WHO, EAGR, ETRD TH
SUBJECT: MGSF01: No Thai H1N1; ASEAN Flu Summit May 7

REF: (A) Bangkok 1060; (B) State 45833; (C) State 45269; (D) State 44254

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: There remain no reported cases of A/H1N1 in humans or swine in Thailand. Control measures at the airports are in effect. The Royal Thai Government (RTG) will host May 7-8 a ministerial summit of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) + 3 (Japan, China, South Korea) health ministers. CDC, State and USAID representatives will attend the meeting; digital video conference with Washington will be held on both days. Swine product imports from the U.S. continue to be effectively banned as Post engagement continues. Embassy Bangkok held a May 6 EAC meeting but will institute no extraordinary measures at this time beyond continued communication with the Embassy community and general American public in Thailand. END SUMMARY

NO H1N1 CASES

2. (U) As of May 6, there have been no confirmed cases of A/H1N1 influenza in Thailand. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) continues to direct H1N1 preparations. On May 3, a group of 14 Thai students and teachers returning to Bangkok from Mexico were met by MoPH officials and voluntarily processed. After examination, three were quarantined in a MoPH hospital until tests confirmed the absence of A/H1N1. Currently two Thais (not associated with the group of students and teachers) and one German are under quarantine after they arrived from overseas with high temperatures and flu-like symptoms; test results have not yet determined if they have A/H1N1.

ASEAN + 3 MINISTERIAL SUMMIT MAY 7

3. (U) The RTG will host a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) + 3 (Japan, South Korea and China) public health ministers May 7-8 in Bangkok to plan regional cooperation.

The "ASEAN+3 Health Ministers Special Meeting on Influenza A(H1N1)" on May 8 will be preceded by the "Special Meeting of Senior Officials on Health Development" on May 7.

¶4. (U) The summit will consider how to use the 2003 SARS outbreak as a model for regional H1N1 response. USG officials are invited to attend the meetings on both days of the summit; State, CDC and USAID representatives will participate. On May 7 and 8 there will be a digital video conference with HHS/CDC officials in the U.S. to discuss the U.S. experience with A/H1N1 and preparedness plans.

ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

¶5. (SBU) Airport officials continue to thermoscan passengers at the major Thai airports (Suvarnabhumi (Bangkok), Chiang Mai, Phuket, Samui, and Hat Yai). Krabi airport has one daily flight from Malaysia and arrivals are randomly checked with an ear thermometer.

The MoPH appears to be directing management of passengers with symptoms. CDC Southeast Asia Director was on the flight with returning Thai students and teachers (paragraph two) and noted that the flight crew distributed questionnaires on arrival, before deplaning. MoPH agents first escorted the 14 arrivals from Mexico off the aircraft to a separate airport quarantine. All RTG actions appear to have the voluntary cooperation of passengers. With regard to symptomatic passengers, the MoPH states that it will contact passengers surrounding any passenger who develops a confirmed case of A/H1N1.

THAILAND MAINTAINS BAN ON SWINE IMPORTS

¶6. (SBU) On April 27, the RTG Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Livestock Development issued an official memorandum to its port inspection offices to consider carefully the importation of swine

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and swine carcasses from the United States, Mexico, and any country announcing an A/H1N1 outbreak. On May 1 and 4, Post delivered demarche points to senior officials at the Ministries of Commerce, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture to inform them of USG concerns per Ref D. As of May 6 the ban on all swine products (Ref A) continues. Septel will report RTG response to demarche.

EMBASSY BANGKOK PREPARATIONS

¶7. (SBU) On May 6 Embassy Bangkok held a A/H1N1 Working Group/sub-EAC committee meeting to discuss A/H1N1 status, and review tripwire and Mission preparation plans. The Mission will not at this time take any extraordinary measures, but will release a new management notice, and warden message to follow, with an update on A/H1N1 in Thailand and guidance. While Post will continue regular meetings and coordination with Consulate General Chiang Mai, it was agreed that any confirmed A/H1N1 cases in Thailand, or sustained transmission in neighboring countries, would trigger an immediate sub-EAC meeting and consideration of other actions. CDC and RMO physicians warned that influenza season is year-round in Southeast Asia, and that a spike in cases is usually seen around this time of year. Our planning assumption is that there probably will be some confirmed A/H1N1 cases in Thailand in the months ahead.

¶8. (U) POC is ESTH officer Hal Howard, howardhh@state.gov. Other information will be reported through the Share-Point Matrix as requested in Ref B. Thermoscan reporting will be by email per Ref ¶C.

JOHN